

ASEAN-CHINA COOPERATION IN THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

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Executive Summary

1. As of 2 June 2020, China and ASEAN countries had reported a total of 84,603 and 94,183 confirmed COVID-19 cases respectively, posing great challenges to economies in the region.
2. However, China and ASEAN countries have carried out fruitful cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral levels, drawing the two even closer and laying greater foundation for building a more solid ASEAN-China community.
3. Amid the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003, China and ASEAN created the first regional cooperative framework for public health. After 17 years, both sides have established cooperation mechanisms such as the Health Ministers Meeting, Senior Officials' Meeting on Health Development, Forum on Health Cooperation and Public Health Cooperation Fund.
4. At the bilateral level, China and individual ASEAN country have carried out close cooperation via both governmental and social channels. When the COVID-19 pandemic first broke out in China, ASEAN countries had provided China with both material and spiritual support in a timely and effective manner. When the virus spread to ASEAN countries, China has been ready with its assistance.
5. A Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting on COVID-19 was held in Vientiane, Laos on 20 February, and on 14 April, a video conference between leaders of ASEAN, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (10+3) on COVID-19 was hosted. China has also initiated cooperation efforts with five Mekong countries under the Lancang-Mekong cooperation framework.
6. The COVID-19 pandemic poses serious challenges to the economic and social development of China and ASEAN, including the slowdown in economic growth, obstruction to personnel exchanges, and rise of poverty in both relative and absolute terms. The mutually beneficial economic and trade cooperation between China and ASEAN is likely to maintain its vitality despite the spread of the virus.

7. The digital economy, which has shown its potential during the pandemic, is becoming a promising area for future cooperation between China and ASEAN. The spread of COVID-19 has alerted countries to the necessity of optimising the ASEAN community.
8. In the future, China and ASEAN could work closely to first, improve the capability for regional governance, which includes optimising the frameworks for multilateral cooperation, establish a multi-layered structure for governance and training talents who are skilled in regional governance, and cultivate a sense of community in this region.
9. Second, accelerate regional economic integration and finalise the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement quickly so as to promote economic recovery and development. Third, take the ASEAN-China Year of Digital Economy Cooperation as an opportunity for establishing strategic ties and promoting the construction of a digital Silk Road.
10. Fourth, push forward construction projects along the Belt and Road with concerted efforts, ensuring both the speed of construction and safety of personnel, and setting up a fast track that allows smooth flow of business, logistics, manufacturing and technical personnel.
11. Fifth, develop a people-oriented philosophy for security and development with priority given to the safety and developmental interests of people in the region, and build up a people-oriented East Asia community.

ASEAN-CHINA COOPERATION IN THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

YANG Yue & LI Fujian*

Cooperation on Public Health: History of Mechanisms

- 1.1 The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) of 2003 proved to be an invaluable experience for China and ASEAN in the fight against COVID-19. The region has continuously improved and put in place mechanisms for governing regional public health since the outbreak of SARS.
- 1.2 The special meeting of ASEAN-China leaders on SARS held on 29 April 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand established a new mechanism for China and ASEAN to work together to fight against future SARS-like virus. China and ASEAN held many subsequent meetings to discuss specific measures on minimising the negative impact of SARS-like virus and on issues such as labour, transportation, tourism, information and health under the frameworks of 10+1 and 10+3.
- 1.3 The outbreak of SARS underscored the absence of a cooperation mechanism in East Asia at the time: it could not provide an effective platform for dealing with a common public health crisis, not to mention a special organisation responsible for sounding early warnings of any emerging public health crisis, the coordination needed to put it under control and the joint efforts to prevent the escalation of the crisis. The institutional construction of such a mechanism has been high on the agenda.
- 1.4 The avian flu outbreak in December 2003 prompted further ASEAN-China cooperation on public health. Key officials of agricultural and health ministries from China and ASEAN held the ASEAN-China Special Meeting on the Prevention of Avian Influenza in Beijing in March 2004. An ASEAN-China health cooperation

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fund was proposed to deal with possible future public health crises, marking another important step in establishing institutionalised cooperation on public health between China and ASEAN.¹

- 1.5 The first ASEAN-China Health Ministers Meeting was held in Myanmar in 2006 to discuss the prevention and control of AIDS, avian influenza, newly emerged infectious diseases and other issues, and passed a resolution on the official establishment of the ASEAN-China Public Health Cooperation Fund to support public health cooperation projects across the region. The ministerial meeting is held every two years.
- 1.6 Since 2011, ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting on Health Development (SOMHD) has been held annually to enhance stronger and more frequent cooperation on public health. Officials from the two sides draw on their experience to formulate cooperation plans for the following year.²
- 1.7 In 2015, China's National Health and Family Planning Commission announced a three-year plan for exchange and cooperation on public health along the Belt and Road, prioritising cooperation with ASEAN. China has also established the ASEAN-China Forum on Health Cooperation under the framework of the China-ASEAN Expo to promote extensive exchanges and deeper cooperation in official, industrial, academic and research channels.
- 1.8 The practical experience accumulated when dealing with major epidemics such as SARS and avian influenza as well as the formulation of mature and complete mechanisms for cooperation have enabled China and ASEAN to act promptly in the prevention and control of COVID-19.

¹ Qi Feng, et al, Discussion on the issue of Public Health Security Cooperation Mechanism at the China-ASEAN Free Trade Zone (Zhongguo dongmeng ziyou maoyiqu gonggong weisheng anquan hezuo jizhi wentide tantao), *Southeast Asian Studies*, No. 1, 2006.

² National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, The commission attended the 6th 10+1 and 6th 10+3 Senior Officials' Meetings on Health Development ("Woweì canjia diliuci zhongguo-dongmeng weisheng fazhan gaoguanhui he diliuci zhongrihan-dongmeng weisheng fazhan gaoguanhui"), available at <http://www.nhc.gov.cn/gjhzs/s3582/201608/9a33ea99ae904b94b55a2cc3b6498dcc.shtml> (accessed 20 April 2020).

Bilateral Anti-Pandemic Cooperation³

- 2.1 At the bilateral level, ASEAN heads of state had conveyed their support for President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang when the pandemic broke out. Donations in the form of key anti-pandemic supplies such as masks and protective gowns poured in from governments at both national and local levels, enterprises, non-governmental institutions and other social organisations. People from all walks of life in ASEAN also extended their support through videos, holding of charity-oriented sports events and so on. When the virus spread to Southeast Asia, China has reciprocated the kindness and extended its assistance.
- 2.2 In particular, medical experts from China and ASEAN countries share their experience and knowledge via video conferencing in the treatment and care for COVID-19 patients. China has sent eight batches of medical experts to Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines, and helped to build virus testing laboratories in the latter two countries. The Chinese government has provided assistance in medical testing and patient treatment, while providing guidance to some ASEAN-China joint ventures on pandemic protection to mitigate the economic impacts. For example, on 27 March, a Chinese medical experts group gave instructions on pandemic prevention to enterprises in the Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone in Cambodia to keep business and production in this area going.
- 2.3 Enterprises and all sectors of society have also played an important role in the COVID-19 response as well. On 11 February, the Lao-China Friendship Association and Vientiane municipal government jointly organised a fundraising campaign to support China's anti-pandemic efforts. More than 300 Lao companies donated or pledged to donate a total of US\$500,000.
- 2.4 In return, the Silk Road Family Joint Campaign co-organised by the China Peace Development Foundation and Cambodian Civil Society Alliance Forum raised anti-pandemic supplies worth US\$160,000 for Cambodia. On 28 April, the BlueSky Rescue Team, a Chinese non-governmental emergency rescue organisation, was in

³ See Annex I for detailed ASEAN-China Cooperation in COVID-19 response at the bilateral level.

Cambodia to conduct sterilisation operations and provide Cambodia with anti-pandemic materials worth about RMB1.28 million.

- 2.5 For Brunei, Chinese companies set up the first virus testing laboratory in Southeast Asia and provided follow-up technical support as well. At the request of the Brunei government, Chinese companies have also built a web-based emergency response platform for the pandemic.
- 2.6 Bilateral anti-pandemic efforts are also evident in economic and trade cooperation, particularly in maintaining the stability of bilateral industrial chains and supply chains. In Q1 2020, Vietnam rose to the third place in China's inbound foreign investment. Chinese companies have created tens of thousands of jobs in Vietnam and the two sides have continued to promote agricultural cooperation during the outbreak to maintain regular trade of agricultural products.
- 2.7 With Singapore, China has agreed to establish a fast track for personnel exchanges needed by anti-pandemic efforts and a green channel for transporting urgently needed medical supplies.
- 2.8 The Myanmar textile industry has also benefitted from the bilateral cooperation. In the face of a large number of order cancellation by European and American countries, which seriously threatened the survival of Myanmar enterprises, China airlifted 15 tons of garment raw materials to Myanmar, and solved the shortage of raw materials in its textile industry through land, sea and air. This has been very helpful in coping with the temporary shutdown and rising unemployment rate.

Anti-Pandemic Cooperation under Multilateral Frameworks

The 10+1 framework

- 3.1 Under the 10+1 framework, the ASEAN health sector at national and regional levels responded immediately to the outbreak as early as the first week of January 2020 when China shared the first report of pneumonia cases to the ASEAN Secretariat.

3.2 Numerous meetings, video conferences, meetings and discussions between ASEAN and China on ways to combat the coronavirus had since been held (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1 EVENTS UNDER THE 10+1 FRAMEWORK
(FEBRUARY-MAY 2020)**

Date	Event
6 Feb	Secretary-General of ASEAN Lim Jock Hoi wrote to Chinese State Councillor Wang Yi, sending a positive signal that ASEAN stood by China in the COVID-19 outbreak
14 Feb	Chinese Ambassador to ASEAN Deng Xijun met ASEAN Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi at the ASEAN Secretariat and conducted in-depth discussions on the pandemic
15 Feb	ASEAN issued its Chairman's Statement as a coordinated COVID-19 response, expressing its support for China's efforts to fight against the outbreak, emphasising that countries in the region should work together to beat the virus ⁴
20 Feb	The Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting on COVID-19 was held in Vientiane, Laos State Councillor Wang Yi met Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi Clinical medical experts from China and ASEAN convened a video conference, focusing on the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 patients
8 Apr	ASEAN-China Business Council held a forum themed <i>Fight COVID-19: China-ASEAN Economic and Trade Cooperation</i>
23 Apr	The 21st ASEAN-China Joint Cooperation Committee meeting was held as a video conference
24 April	State Councillor Wang Yi had a teleconversation with Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi
19 May	ASEAN-China Centre and China-ASEAN University Consortium on Medicine and Health jointly held a video conference, sharing experience in the COVID-19 fight Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries held a <i>China-ASEAN Non-governmental Friendship Organisation Leaders' Special Meeting</i> via video conference
29 May	ASEAN-China Economic Ministers' Joint Statement on Combating the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and Enhancing ACFTA Cooperation issued The Mission of China to ASEAN and Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia, supported by the Permanent Mission of the Philippines as country coordinator for ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations, jointly organised Jakarta Virtual Forum that brought experts from China and ASEAN together to discuss regional cooperation on fighting the COVID-19
31 May	Clinical medical experts from ASEAN and China convened another video conference on the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 patients

Source: compiled by authors from various sources.

3.3 The Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting on COVID-19 was held in Vientiane, Laos on 20 February. As the first multilateral international conference dedicated to this issue since the outbreak, it demonstrates the readiness of ASEAN

⁴ ASEAN, "Chairman's Statement on ASEAN Collective Response to the Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019", 15 February 2020, available at <https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-asean-collective-response-outbreak-coronavirus-disease-2019/> (accessed 27 May 2020).

and China to embark on multilateral cooperation. The meeting also sets an example for global cooperation on the fight against COVID-19. Foreign ministers exchanged in-depth views on anti-pandemic cooperation and discussed initiatives such as strengthening the joint prevention and control of COVID-19, maintaining normal economic and social exchanges, and establishing a long-term cooperative mechanism for public health.⁵

- 3.4 ASEAN-China Economic Ministers' Joint Statement on Combating the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and Enhancing ACFTA Cooperation issued on 29 May called for "joint efforts in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on global and regional trade and investment, restoring economic and trade confidence, as well as pursuing and securing sustainable and long-term growth of international trade and investment".⁶
- 3.5 On 23 April, the 21st ASEAN-China Joint Cooperation Committee meeting was held as a video conference, and in-depth discussions were conducted to strengthen coordination efforts and promote cooperative projects between the two sides against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.6 The Chinese government attaches great importance to solving the shortage of medical supplies for the ASEAN Secretariat. On 21 April, China donated 75,000 masks, 35 forehead thermometers and 300 bottles of hand sanitiser to the ASEAN Secretariat.⁷ On 29 April, the Guangxi government donated 20,000 masks to the ASEAN Secretariat.

⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Coronavirus Disease", 20 February 2020, available at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjbx_673089/xghd_673097/t1747428.shtml (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁶ "ASEAN-China Economic Ministers' Joint Statement on Combating the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and Enhancing ACFTA Cooperation, 29 May 2020", available at <http://www.caexpo.org/uploadfile/2020/0601/20200601084533512.pdf> (accessed 6 June 2020).

⁷ ASEAN Secretariat, "China donates medical supplies to ASEAN Secretariat for COVID-19 prevention", 21 April 2020, available at <https://asean.org/china-donates-medical-supplies-asean-secretariat-covid-19-prevention/> (accessed 30 May 2020).

Under the 10+3 framework

- 3.7 On 3 February, ASEAN plus China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (10+3) held a SOMHD focusing on the COVID-19 fight via a video conference. At the 12th 10+3 Ambassadorial Meeting on 27 February, the parties agreed that the 10+3 framework should further enhance the cooperation on public health and play a greater role in the joint prevention and control of the pandemic. On 7 April, 10+3 health ministers had another video conference on COVID-19.
- 3.8 At the Special 10+3 Summit on COVID-19 on 14 April, all parties agreed on the initiative to jointly fight against the epidemic, improve cooperation on public health and restore the vitality of regional economy. Premier Li Keqiang proposed three initiatives for cooperation: (i) enhance all-round cooperation against the pandemic and build up stronger capacity for public health; (ii) revitalise economic growth and deepen regional economic integration; and (iii) intensify policy coordination to weather all kinds of risks and challenges.⁸
- 3.9 The Joint Statement of Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on COVID-19 was a commitment to present a united front against the common threat of COVID-19. Multiple specific measures were also proposed, including strengthening cooperation in the R&D of drugs and vaccines, setting up a reserve of medical supplies, establishing a special fund for public health emergencies and prioritising the signing of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) on the agenda.⁹

Lancang-Mekong anti-pandemic cooperation

- 3.10 Under the framework of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation, China and the five countries along the Mekong River have launched cooperation in various aspects in

⁸ Li Keqiang attends special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on COVID-19 pandemic (“Li Keqiang Chuxi Dongmeng Yu Zhongrihan Kangji Xinguanfeiyanyiqing Lingdaoren Tebiehuiyi”), available at http://china.cnr.cn/news/20200415/t20200415_525053719.shtml (accessed 25 April 2020).

⁹ “Joint statement of the special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)”, available at <https://aseanplusthree.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Final-Joint-Statement-of-the-Special-APT-Summit-on-COVID-193360.pdf> (accessed 25 April 2020).

response to the pandemic, representing a new dimension in ASEAN-China cooperation.

- 3.11 In the early stage of the pandemic, the five countries along the lower Mekong River donated various relief supplies to the Chinese government, provided Chinese citizens with humanitarian aid, reallocate Chinese tourists from badly hit areas, and rendered prompt help to patients who were suspected cases, which fully embodied the friendship and togetherness among the people.¹⁰
- 3.12 On 20 February, the Fifth Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Vientiane, Laos. The ministers agreed to consider WHO recommendations and, as allowed by the specific reality of each country and supported by the spirit of solidarity, further strengthen information-sharing and scientific research to bring the current pandemic under control and prevent the escalation of other infectious diseases into a pandemic. State Councillor Wang Yi proposed adopting a long-term strategy to establish a joint mechanism for dealing with major public health emergencies so as to safeguard the health of the people in this region.¹¹
- 3.13 Under the framework of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation, the Yunnan provincial government publicised *The Handbook of Prevention and Treatment of the Pneumonia Caused by the Novel Coronavirus* in five bilingual versions (Chinese and, respectively, Cambodian, Laotian, Myanmar, Thai and Vietnamese) on 26 March, sharing China's experience in the pandemic fight.¹²

¹⁰ Members of LMC support China to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic ("Lancang-Mekong Cooperation China Secretariat, Lanmei wuguo zhichi zhongguo zhanyi"), 25 February 2020, available at <http://www.lmcchina.org/hzdt/t1749125.htm> (accessed 24 April 2020).

¹¹ Wang Yi elaborates on priorities of future Lancang-Mekong cooperation ("Wangyi tan weilai lanmei hezuo zhongdian"), 21 February 2020, available at http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2020-02/21/c_1125606367.htm (accessed 24 April 2020).

¹² E-guidelines for prevention of COVID-19 in Chinese- Khmer/ Lao/ Burmese/Thai/ Vietnamese is published ("Lancang-Mekong Cooperation China Secretariat, Jian lao mian tai yue wuguo shuangyu fangyi dianzishu fabu"), 27 March 2020, available at <http://www.lmcchina.org/hzdt/t1762370.htm> (accessed 24 April 2020).

- 3.14 During the 91st joint patrol operation on the Mekong River launched by China, Thailand, Myanmar and Laos (24 to 27 March), China proposed 20 measures to ensure the success of operation and safety of patrolling personnel. The operation was directed via remote video conference to avoid direct contact. Law enforcement teams were sent to inform people along the Mekong River of the need to prevent and control COVID-19 and dengue fever.¹³

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Impact on economic and social development: challenges

- 4.1 In early April, the United Nations' *2020 Financing for Sustainable Development Report* shows that since the outbreak of the pandemic, investors have withdrawn US\$90 billion from emerging markets, marking the largest disinvestment in history.¹⁴ Both China and ASEAN are prone to slow economic growth, in which tourism, investment and trade are the worst affected sectors. The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) of ASEAN countries' manufacturing industry has plunged since March, boding ill for its seven members' domestic manufacturing. Companies have continued to cut their workforce and downsize business.¹⁵
- 4.2 The Thai research institute KASIKORN Research Centre predicts that a one per cent drop in China's economic growth will result in a 2.8% reduction in its direct investment in ASEAN countries whose losses could reach US\$2.4 billion to US\$3.4 billion, or 0.07% to 0.11% of their GDP. ASEAN countries' total exports to China will also fall by a 1.2%.¹⁶

¹³ Ninety-first joint patrol on Mekong River completed ("Lancang-Mekong Cooperation China Secretariat, Di jiushi yi ci zhong lao mian tai meigonghe lianhe xunluo zhifa yuanman jieshu"), 27 March 2020, available at <http://www.lmcchina.org/hzdt/t1763406.htm> (accessed 24 April 2020).

¹⁴ "Financing for sustainable development report 2020", available at <https://developmentfinance.un.org/fsdr2020> (accessed 27 May 2020).

¹⁵ China-ASEAN Chamber of Agricultural Commerce, ASEAN economy under the COVID-19 pandemic ("Yi Qing Zhong De Dong Meng Jing Ji"), 3 April 2020, available at http://www.cacac.com.cn/china/html/2020/dmzx_0420200303/7307.html (accessed 27 May 2020).

¹⁶ The economic and trade relations between China-ASEAN, ASEAN 10+3 from the perspective of COVID-19 pandemic ("You Xin Guan Yi Qing Kan Zhong Guo Yu Dong Meng, Dong Meng 10+3 De Jing Mao Lian Xi"), 28 February 2020, available at https://www.sohu.com/a/376502444_402008 (accessed 27 May 2020).

- 4.3 China's domestic consumption has also suffered from the pandemic, inevitably impacting trade-dependent ASEAN countries. As China is a major supplier in the region, the decline in its supply capacity has weakened the trade of raw materials and intermediate products with ASEAN. Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and China's border provinces such as Guangxi and Yunnan will bear the brunt of it.¹⁷
- 4.4 The pandemic has hampered people-to-people exchanges. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand estimates Chinese tourist arrivals to Thailand to drop by two to nine million in 2020.¹⁸ According to statistics from the Vietnam Tourism Bureau, more than 13,000 people cancelled their room reservations from January to 3 February, while related activities and businesses dived by 30% to 50% and popular tourist destinations lost 30% to 50% of their customers.¹⁹
- 4.5 The pandemic is also expected to worsen poverty on a global scale. The World Bank predicts that the COVID-19 pandemic may result in 40 million to 60 million people falling into extreme poverty, with an estimated 4.5 million in East Asia and the Pacific. It is also likely to widen the wealth gap and lead to relative poverty as well.²⁰

Opportunities

- 4.6 However, economic cooperation and trade between China and ASEAN seemingly could not be halted by the pandemic. In Q1 2020, trading volume rose to US\$142.4 billion, with a year-on-year increase of 3.9%; ASEAN as a whole has become China's biggest trading partner for the first time. China's exports to ASEAN

¹⁷ How will China-ASEAN cooperation be affected under the COVID-19 pandemic (“Yi Qing Zhi Xia, Zhong Guo-Dong Meng He Zuo Hui Shou Na Xie Ying Xiang”), 17 February 2020, available at <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1658740334392306564&wfr=spider&for=pc> (accessed 27 May 2020).

¹⁸ Austin Bodetti, “Coronavirus hits Thailand hard”, *The Diplomat*, 13 February 2020, available at <https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/coronavirus-hits-thailand-hard> (accessed 16 February 2020).

¹⁹ See footnote 17.

²⁰ Daniel Gerszon Mahler, et al, “The impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on global poverty: why Sub-Saharan Africa might be the region hardest”, 20 April 2020, available at <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/impact-covid-19-coronavirus-global-poverty-why-sub-saharan-africa-might-be-region-hardest> (accessed 27 May 2020).

increased by 0.4% while imports rose by 8.4%.²¹ Thanks to the high complementarity in economy and trade between the two sides as well as policymaking support of the Belt and Road Initiative and ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement, regional economic cycle in the area will surpass the global one, deepening the interdependency of countries in the region.

- 4.7 The digital economy spawned by the pandemic will be a popular focus for cooperation between China and ASEAN. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the pandemic has promoted business via the internet. Social media platforms have become the main source of information and cloud computing has helped scientists carry out in-depth research on the coronavirus. Shopping patterns have undergone profound changes as well.²²
- 4.8 In recent years, ASEAN and China have made progresses in e-commerce, technological innovation, 5G networks and smart cities, and the two sides can go online to actively explore areas like telemedicine, medical supplies trade and business opportunities to jointly build the digital Silk Road. Health tourism and the biomedical industry will become key investment areas after the pandemic, with promising projects for China, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and other countries to collaborate on. Online education and shopping are also likely to prosper.

Impact on building a regional community

- 4.9 While the pandemic has brought massive health threats and property losses to the people in China and ASEAN countries, it has also further promoted the development of the ASEAN community, strengthened political mutual trust between ASEAN and China, and facilitated regional cooperation.

²¹ General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, Press conference on detailed situation of import and export of the first quarter of 2020 ("Haiguan zongshu 2020 nian yijidu jinchukou qingkuang xinwen fabuhui"), available at <http://fangtan.customs.gov.cn/tabid/996/default.aspx> (accessed 27 May 2020).

²² "The COVID-19 crisis: accentuating the need to bridge digital divides", UNCTAD, 6 April 2020.

The ASEAN community

- 4.10 ASEAN countries have intensified cooperation to contain the pandemic, improve public health governance and stabilise regional economies, hence deepening regional integration. Pandemic response has shown the solidarity of ASEAN countries. The governments of Singapore and Malaysia have established a cooperation group at the ministerial level to fight the pandemic, while Cambodia had assisted Malaysia in chartering flights to fetch Malaysians stranded in Cambodia. Vietnam had donated a large amount of medical supplies to Laos and Cambodia, and Thailand had worked to help stranded Myanmar and Laotian workers in Thailand to return home.
- 4.11 A series of economic cooperation projects aimed at promoting ASEAN interconnection and trade are also being implemented during the pandemic. Informal meetings of ASEAN economic ministers held in March saw the adoption of 12 initiatives focusing on e-commerce, commodity trade, energy, information technology, agriculture, finance, statistics and innovation to enhance ASEAN's resilience and operational efficiency.

ASEAN-China community of shared future

- 4.12 Political mutual trust between China and ASEAN has been further strengthened during the pandemic. The two sides highly affirm each other's contribution to regional and global health security. During China's most critical period, it received generous assistance from individual ASEAN countries. While striving to enhance pandemic prevention and control at home, China also shares information and provides supplies to ASEAN countries. To a certain extent, the pandemic has become a touchstone for the bilateral relationship, which has not only raised the awareness of the community, but also pushed practical cooperation across various fields to a new level.
- 4.13 The pandemic also triggers reflections on the cultural similarity. While methods and ways of responding to the pandemic vary greatly across different places, they also

reflect the cultural commonality of specific regions.²³ East Asian countries, which put their people first in dealing with the pandemic, have demonstrated the advantage of their cultural commonality, which will lay a solid foundation for building a stronger ASEAN-China community of shared future.

East Asia community

- 4.14 Crises, rather than divide the East Asia community, have often brought regional cooperation to another level. The financial crisis that hit Asia in 1997 highlighted the importance of regional cooperation and joint resilience to the 10+3 countries. The first round of 10+3 Summit was held right after the crisis (at the end of 1997). To prevent the outbreak of another possible financial crisis, 10+3 countries signed an agreement to establish a bilateral currency swap mechanism in 2000 (i.e. the Chiang Mai Initiative).
- 4.15 In 2001, the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) submitted a report to the 10+3 Summit on the building of an East Asia Community, which was endorsed by countries in the region. The global financial crisis that engulfed the world in 2008 and the debt crisis that plagued Europe in 2010 accelerated the shift of the world's economic and political focus to the Asia Pacific. It was then that regional integration and the establishment of an East Asia community regained momentum.
- 4.16 The Asian Monetary Fund was launched in 2010, marking the successful establishment of the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateral Mechanism (a regional crisis responding mechanism in East Asia). In 2012, the summit meeting commemorating the 15th anniversary of the 10+3 cooperation adopted the Report of the East Asia Vision Group II (EAVGII), kick-starting the establishment of the East Asia Economic Community in 2020 as one of the main goals. In the same year, RCEP negotiations were officially initiated.

²³ Michele J Gelfand, Joshua Conrad Jackson, Xinyue Pan, Danan Nau, Munqith Dagher and Chi-Y Chiu, "Cultural and institutional factors predicting the infection rate and mortality likelihood of the COVID-19 pandemic", working paper, available at <https://psyarxiv.com/m7f8a/> (accessed 27 May 2020).

- 4.17 The pandemic has highlighted the need for building a community of shared future for countries in East Asia. While there is a pressing need to build a pandemic-prevention community, mitigating the economic impact of the pandemic is equally imperative. These problems cannot be solved by a single country. Measures determined by the Special 10+3 Summit on COVID-19 are likely to produce a synergy for the joint prevention and control of the pandemic, secure the smooth flow along industrial and supply chains in the region and promote the recovery of economic growth in East Asia against the backdrop of a sluggish global economy.

Prospect for Future Cooperation

- 5.1 While the people-centred, mutual-assistance cultural commonality, resilience of economic and trade relations, and determination to adhere to multilateralism have set great grounds for the future development of bilateral relations, there are areas that ASEAN-China relations need to be optimised, particularly in terms of prioritising what is important under such a new circumstance.

Improve the capacity for coordinated regional governance

- 5.2 The COVID-19 epidemic has alerted countries to the fact that public health is the foundation of social and economic development, China and ASEAN countries included. There is hence a need to strengthen governance capabilities in non-traditional security areas including the coordinated response to a public health crisis. There is room for strengthening information communication, promoting experience sharing, and learning from each other's best practices so as to build people-centred domestic and regional governance systems on the basis of enhancing domestic governance capabilities.
- 5.3 The two sides could further improve the framework for multilateral cooperation, formulate a multi-layer structure for coordinated governance, build talent pools in regional governance and cultivate people's regional identity. During the COVID-19 epidemic, cooperation among sister cities, friendship provinces and bordering localities has proven helpful and efficient, while enterprises and social networks have also played an active role, providing a useful reference for multiple governance.

Accelerate regional economic integration

- 5.4 The outbreak of the COVID-19 has further enhanced the awareness of the necessity for an ASEAN-China community for a shared future. There are hence opportunities brought about by the epidemic to accelerate regional economic integration, promote post-epidemic recovery and boost further development.²⁴
- 5.5 China and ASEAN could strengthen policy coordination, create an open and transparent environment for trade and ensure the stability of supply chains and industrial chains.
- 5.6 The two sides could fully implement the upgraded protocol of ASEAN-China FTA and encourage enterprises to fully implement it. The signing of RCEP in 2020 would also go a long way to consolidate and enhance the advantages of agglomerating the regional industrial chains.
- 5.7 Countries could also give full play to the role of trade and investment platforms for chambers of commerce and enterprises from various countries to find their business partners.

Seize opportunities from Industry 4.0

- 5.8 The COVID-19 pandemic has opened up new avenues in the Industry 4.0 era such as remote working, automation of production, 5G, artificial intelligence, E-commerce, cashless payment, remote diagnosis and big data.
- 5.9 Since the beginning of 2020, the Chinese government has, on many occasions, deployed key strategies for *The Construction of New Types of Infrastructure* guided by new philosophies of development, driven by technological innovation and based on an IT network. While the central government is emphasising this point to tackle

²⁴ Recording of the international media video briefing of the Chinese Mission to ASEAN (“Zhu dongmeng shituan guoji meiti shipin chui Fenghui shilu”), ThePaper.cn, 20 April 2020, available at https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_7054674 (accessed 7 June 2020).

the impact of COVID-19, many provincial governments have also incorporated *The Construction of New Types of Infrastructure* in major investment projects for 2020.

- 5.10 ASEAN issued *The ASEAN Declaration on Industrial Transformation to Industry 4.0* on 2 November 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand, emphasising the aim of building a prosperous and fair community, accelerate economic growth, and promote social progress through the use of innovation and digital technology in the era of Industry 4.0.
- 5.11 China and ASEAN have a broad common ground in terms of strategic development and could capitalise on the ASEAN-China Year of Digital Economy Cooperation to further strengthen strategic integration and jointly promote the construction of the Digital Silk Road.

Jointly promote the Belt and Road Initiative for shared growth

- 5.12 While large-scale infrastructure projects in various countries have been somewhat affected by the pandemic,²⁵ most of the infrastructure projects under construction along the Belt and Road have been proceeding smoothly, with sufficient measures taken for the prevention of COVID-19. Steady progress has been made in such projects as China-Laos Railway, Jakarta-Bandung High Speed Railway, Malaysia East Coast Railway and Brunei Hengyi Petrochemical amid the COVID-19 outbreak.
- 5.13 Post-COVID-19, China and ASEAN would have to work out ways to strengthen cooperation in resuming business and production. While normalising epidemic prevention, the two sides would do well to guarantee the stable supply of materials and ease essential cross-border travel restrictions. For example, countries could establish a fast track for the movement of personnel working for business, logistics, production and technical services related to the Belt and Road Initiative. China and Singapore are establishing a fast track in June for essential travels of officials and business people with sufficient and effective COVID-19 prevention measures in place. Such a method can also be promoted across the region if and when necessary.

²⁵ Yu Hong, “COVID-19 in Southeast Asia: impact on China’s push for the Belt and Road Initiative”, *EAI Background Brief*, No. 1514.

- 5.14 Projects along the Belt and Road will create jobs for the local community and accelerate technology transfer. The increased overall connectivity across the region will also serve as an accelerator for the economic development of China and ASEAN countries in the post-pandemic era.

Building a people-oriented East Asia community

- 5.15 The safety of people is a prerequisite for the security of a nation. Countries that put their people first could achieve better outcome when fighting against the virus. A people-oriented philosophy is both an update to and an extension of the conventional idea of security. This concept can help countries better cope with a newly emerged crisis through multilateral coordination. ASEAN has it in its charter, blueprint and vision papers that countries should place their people first and behave in a people-oriented way, which facilitated its efforts in coping with terrorism, immigration, climate change, natural disasters and other aspects. This people-oriented philosophy could also be applied to economic development, national security, social governance and the establishment of the East Asia community.

ANNEX I

Bilateral Cooperation between China and ASEAN on the Fight against COVID-19

China-Brunei Cooperation

1. At the beginning of the outbreak, the Sultan of Brunei in his teleconversations with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang had expressed his support and sympathies. The Brunei government and all sectors of society had actively offered assistance to China. On 5 February, the first batch of 50,000 respirator masks donated by Brunei arrived in Guangxi, China.
2. In return on 22 April, the Chinese government donated 100,000 N95 masks and 1,000 disposable isolation gowns to the Brunei government.²⁶ On 14 May, the People's Liberation Army handed over a batch of medical supplies to the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.²⁷ The Chinese Embassy in Brunei provided support for Brunei's procurement of anti-pandemic supplies from China and contributed to the Brunei COVID-19 Relief Fund.
3. Local governments of China such as Guangxi and Nanjing also provided medical supplies to Brunei. At the enterprises level, Chinese companies supplied Brunei with nucleic acid testing reagents, established the first virus testing laboratory in Southeast Asia and provided technical support. At the request of the Brunei government, Chinese companies had quickly set up a web-based emergency response platform for the pandemic. According to rough statistics, Chinese-funded enterprises in Brunei donated more than US\$1.3 million to the local communities.

China-Cambodia Cooperation

4. Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen made a special trip to China on 5 February to express his country's readiness to stand by China in the latter's fight against COVID-19. Cambodia's Ministry of National Defence donated 300,000 masks and 1,500 protective suits to China's Ministry of National Defence.²⁸ The

²⁶ Yu Hong, Ambassador to Brunei, attended the handover ceremony of anti-epidemic materials donated by the Chinese government to the Brunei government ("Zhu Wenlai Dashi Yu Hong Chuxi Zhongguo Zhengfu Juanzhu Wenlai Zhengfu Kangyi Wuzi Jiaojie Yishi"), Embassy of The People's Republic of China in Negara Brunei Darussalam, 24 April 2020, available at <http://bn.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxss/t1772968.htm> (accessed 30 May 2020).

²⁷ Ambassador to Brunei Yu Hong attended the handover ceremony of anti-epidemic materials donated by the Chinese PLA to the Royal Brunei Armed Forces ("Zhu Wenlai Dashi Yu Hong Chuxi Zhongguo Renmin Jiefangjun Xiang Wenlai Huangjia Wuzhuang Budui Juanzhu Kangyi Wuzi Jiaojie Yishi"), Embassy of The People's Republic of China in Negara Brunei Darussalam, 16 May 2020, available at <http://bn.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxss/t1772968.htm> (accessed 30 May 2020).

²⁸ "Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Di Ban: Cambodia will work with Chinese friends to fight against new coronavirus", Embassy of The People's Republic of China in The Kingdom of Cambodia, 2 March 2020, available at <http://kh.china-embassy.org/chn/dssghd/t1751288.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

government of Siem Reap province donated more than 100,000 surgical masks to Kunming, Nanjing and Chongqing.²⁹

5. China has reciprocated by increasing its aid to Cambodia after mid-March. The Chinese anti-pandemic medical expert group arrived at Phnom Penh on 23 March. This is the first time that the Chinese government has sent an anti-pandemic expert group to Southeast Asia. On 1 April, a second batch of anti-pandemic supplies on the PLA's military aircraft arrived at Phnom Penh. On 25 April, Cambodia's Ministry of National Defence received 16 tons of anti-pandemic supplies worth US\$1 million from the Chinese Ministry of National Defence.³⁰ On 11, 13 and 29 May, several batches of supplies provided by China arrived in Cambodia.
6. The Guangxi government provided nearly RMB4 million of anti-pandemic supplies to the Cambodian government and donated disposable surgical masks worth RMB100,000 to the government of Siem Reap province.³¹ Shanghai donated masks and protective suits to Phnom Penh while Shenzhen and Phnom Penh held video-conference meetings on the prevention and control of COVID-19.
7. Chinese enterprises donated 20,000 sets of testing kits to Cambodia and built a video conference system. Chinese enterprises, societies and business associations in Cambodia proposed the establishment of an anti-pandemic fund on 25 March. The Silk Road Family Joint Anti-Pandemic Action organised by the China Foundation for Peace and Development and the Cambodian Civil Society Alliance Forum raised US\$160,000 worth of anti-pandemic supplies for Cambodia.³² In April, The Blue Sky Rescue Team, a Chinese non-governmental rescue organisation,³³ spent 15 days in Cambodia conducting disinfection operations in many public places in 10 municipalities or provinces and providing Cambodia with anti-pandemic supplies worth approximately RMB1.28 million.
8. In Q1 2020, bilateral trade between China and Cambodia reached US\$2.03 billion, registering a 1.7% year-on-year increase; in the first four months of 2020, Cambodia exported 122,000 tons of rice to China, a 28% increase.³⁴ On 27 March, a group of medical experts from China was sent to Cambodia to advise on anti-pandemic

²⁹ "Cambodian local government once again donates anti-epidemic materials to China", Embassy of The People's Republic of China in The Kingdom of Cambodia, 15 February 2020, available at <http://kh.china-embassy.org/chn/dssghd/t1745241.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

³⁰ "The Cambodian Ministry of National Defense received 16 tons of anti-epidemic materials worth US \$1 million from the Chinese Ministry of National Defense", available at <http://cn.freshnewsasia.com/index.php/en/14346-2020-04-25-07-41-31.html> (accessed 27 May 2020).

³¹ "The Consulate in Siem Reap and the Siem Reap provincial government held a handover ceremony for anti-epidemic materials", Embassy of The People's Republic of China in The Kingdom of Cambodia, 9 April 2020, available at <http://kh.china-embassy.org/chn/dssghd/t1767806.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

³² "Ambassador to Cambodia Wang Wentian attends the Cambodia Donation Ceremony of the 'Silk Families' Civil Anti-epidemic Joint Action", Embassy of The People's Republic of China in The Kingdom of Cambodia, 3 April 2020, available at <http://kh.china-embassy.org/chn/dssghd/t1765621.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

³³ "Blue Rescue Team squad aid to Cambodia", 14 May 2020, available at https://www.sohu.com/a/395019357_118392 (accessed 27 May 2020).

³⁴ "Cambodia's economy rebounds with the help of Chinese companies", 6 May 2020, available at <http://finance.eastmoney.com/a/202005061476093928.html> (accessed 27 May 2020).

efforts in the Sihanoukville's Special Economic Zone (SEZ). Production in the SEZ has resumed since.

China-Indonesia Cooperation

9. Indonesian President Joko Widodo in a telephone conversation with President Xi Jinping had expressed the country's solidarity with the Chinese people.³⁵ Donations, letters and videos of support had poured in from all sectors of society in Indonesia.
10. President Xi and President Joko had another telephone conversation in the beginning of March whereby President Xi had promised anti-pandemic support and assistance to Indonesia. On 28 March, medical supplies provided by the Chinese government arrived in Jakarta.³⁶ On 12 May, China's Ministry of National Defence donated 3.6 tons of anti-pandemic supplies to Indonesia's Ministry of Defence and Indonesian National Armed Forces.
11. By 14 April, more donations and promises of donation in the form of 26,000 N95 masks, 197,000 respirator masks, 1,500 protective suits, 30,000 pairs of medical gloves, hundreds of forehead thermometers, pulse oximeters were made by local governments of Beijing, Shanghai, Fujian, Chongqing, Hainan, Guangzhou and other provinces and municipalities in China.³⁷ By 24 April, local Chinese-funded enterprises donated a total of 17,000 N95 masks, 1.885 million disposable masks, 61,000 protective suits, 23,000 protective goggles, 498,000 pairs of medical gloves, and hundreds of forehead thermometers, dozens of AI-powered diagnostic systems and other medical supplies to Indonesia.
12. In April and May 2020, separate video conferences were conducted by medical experts from the ministries of health of the two countries,³⁸ Chinese and Indonesian nursing experts, and Chinese and Indonesian military medical experts.³⁹

³⁵ Xi Jinping and Indonesian President Joko on the phone ("Xi Jinping Tong Yinni Zongtong Zuoke Tong Dianhua"), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 12 February 2020, available at http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjdt_674879/gjldrhdt_674881/t1743549.shtml (accessed 27 May 2020).

³⁶ Chinese government aid to combat epidemic arrives in Indonesia ("Zhongguo Zhengfu Yuanzhu Kangyi Wuzi Yundi Yinni"), Embassy of the People's Republic of China in The Republic of Indonesia, 28 March 2020, available at <http://id.china-embassy.org/chn/ztbd/xxxddd/t1763086.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

³⁷ Chinese local government actively supports Indonesia's fight against new coronary pneumonia epidemic ("Zhongguo Difang Zhengfu Jiji Zhichi Yinni Kangji Xinguan Feiyan Yiqing"), Embassy of The People's Republic of China in The Republic of Indonesia, 14 April 2020, available at <http://id.china-embassy.org/chn/ztbd/xxxddd/t1769566.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

³⁸ Medical experts from Indonesia and China successfully hold remote video conference for new coronary pneumonia ("Zhong Yinni Chenggong Juxing Xinguan Feiyan Yiliao Zhuanjia Yuancheng Shipin Hui"), both by the Embassy of The People's Republic of China in The Republic of Indonesia, 23 April 2020, available at <http://id.china-embassy.org/chn/ztbd/xxxddd/t1772790.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020). Medical experts from Indonesia and China successfully hold the second remote video conference for new coronary pneumonia ("Zhong Yinni Chenggong Juxing Dierchang Xinguan Feiyan Yiliao Zhuanjia Yuancheng Shipin Hui"), Embassy of The People's Republic of China in The Republic of Indonesia, 23 April 2020, available at <http://id.china-embassy.org/chn/ztbd/xxxddd/t1777460.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

³⁹ Military medical experts from Indonesia and China successfully held remote video conference on new coronary pneumonia ("Zhong Yinni Chenggong Juxing Xinguan Feiyan Junshi Yiliao Zhuanjia Yuancheng Shipin Hui"), Embassy of The People's Republic of China in The Republic of Indonesia, 14 May 2020, available at <http://id.china-embassy.org/chn/ztbd/xxxddd/t1779088.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

China-Laos Cooperation

13. Besides phone calls by Laotian leaders to their Chinese counterparts at the early stage of the outbreak to express their support and sympathy, the Lao-China Friendship Association had donated medical supplies to China. On 11 February, the association and the Vientiane municipal government jointly organised a fundraising event to support China's fight against COVID-19. More than 300 Laotian companies had donated or pledged to donate a total of more than US\$500,000.⁴⁰ On 25 February, Laos' Ministry of National Defence donated US\$300,000 to China's Ministry of National Defence.⁴¹
14. China reciprocated on 18 March with testing kits. Chinese medical experts arrived in Laos on 29 March, carrying medical and protective supplies, traditional Chinese medicines and Western pharmaceutical products worth about RMB4.17 million. On 3 April, President Xi Jinping in a telephone call to President of Laos Bounnhang Vorachith had committed to providing full support and assistance to Laos.⁴²
15. On 21 April, the Chinese government provided another batch of anti-pandemic supplies to Laos, including 50,000 testing reagents, 30,000 protective suits, 30,000 N95 masks, 1.4 million surgical masks, 30,000 medical isolation goggles, 700,000 pairs of medical gloves and 1,200 forehead thermometers.⁴³
16. On 24 April, a group of five medical experts from the PLA arrived in Vientiane by military aircraft, together with anti-pandemic supplies. On 27 April, 900,000 surgical masks and traditional Chinese medicines donated by the International Department of the Communist Party to Laos was handed over in a ceremony held.⁴⁴
17. On 13 April, a Shanghai-Laos anti-pandemic video conference was conducted. A day thereafter on 14 April, Chinese-funded enterprises donated anti-pandemic supplies worth about ¥240 million to the Louangphabang provincial government in a ceremony held. On 21 April, Shanghai handed over anti-pandemic supplies to

⁴⁰ "The Lao Party and Government actively assist China in combating the new coronavirus epidemic", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 11 February 2020, available at <http://la.china-embassy.org/chn/dssghd/t1743498.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁴¹ "The Lao Army provides donations for China to fight the epidemic", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 26 February 2020, available at <http://la.china-embassy.org/chn/dssghd/t1749553.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁴² "Xi Jinping had a phone conversation with the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party and President Ben Yang", 3 April 2020, available at http://www.xinhuanet.com/2020-04/03/c_1125811728.htm (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁴³ "The Chinese government decided to assist Laos with a new batch of supplies for the prevention and control of novel coronavirus epidemic", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 21 April 2020, available at <http://la.china-embassy.org/chn/dssghd/t1772003.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁴⁴ "Minister of the International Liaison Department of Lao People's Revolutionary Party thanks International Department, Central Committee of CPC for its anti-pandemic medical supplies", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 21 April 2020, available at <http://la.china-embassy.org/chn/dssghd/t1774086.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

Vientiane. On 28 April, Chinese-funded enterprises donated another ¥500 million as anti-pandemic fund to Laos.⁴⁵

18. The Mohan-Boten Port between China and Laos has adopted extra prevention and control measures to ensure the safety of cross-border transportation. Its capacity has been restored to 80% of the pre-pandemic level, which is beneficial to the economic recovery of the bordering area between China and Laos.⁴⁶

China-Malaysia Cooperation

19. Leaders of China and Malaysia have been in frequent contact to work closely together to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic (see Annex Table).

**ANNEX TABLE EXCHANGES BETWEEN CHINA AND MALAYSIA
(FEBRUARY-APRIL 2020)**

Date	Exchange
1 Feb	State Councillor Wang Yi had a telephone conversation with Malaysia's Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah ⁴⁷
13 Feb	President Xi Jinping teleconversed with Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad ⁴⁸
11 Mar	State Councillor Wang Yi had a teleconversation with the new Malaysian Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Tun Hussein ⁴⁹
26 Mar	Chinese and Malaysian medical experts held a video conference ⁵⁰
16 Apr	Consulate-General of PRC in Kuching, Fujian Novel Coronavirus Prevention and Control Remote Support Centre and the Sarawak state government of Malaysia held a special video conference on using traditional Chinese medicine for COVID-19 patients

Source: Compiled by authors from various sources.

⁴⁵ "Yunnan Construction Investment Company donated anti-pandemic funds to Laos", Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, 29 April 2020, available at <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/i/jyjl/j/202004/20200402960107.shtml> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁴⁶ "The Mohan-Boten Port implements point-to-point cross-border transportation", 7 May 2020, available at http://m.haiwainet.cn/middle/3543481/2020/0507/content_31784401_1.html (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁴⁷ Telephone call between Wang Yi and Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah of Malaysia ("Wang Yi Tong Malaixiya Waizhang Saifuding Tong Dianhua"), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2 February 2020, available at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjdt_674879/gjldrhd_674881/t1738938.shtml (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁴⁸ Phone call between Xi Jinping and Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir ("Xi Jinping Tong Malaixiya Zongli Mahadier Tong Dianhua"), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 13 February 2020, available at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjdt_674879/gjldrhd_674881/t1744491.shtml (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁴⁹ Telephone call between Wang Yi and the new Foreign Minister of Malaysia, Hishammuddin Tun Hussein ("Wang Yi Tong Malaixiya Xinren Waizhang Xishamuding Tong Dianhua"), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 11 March 2020, available at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjdz_673089/xghd_673097/t1754580.shtml (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁵⁰ Chinese and Malaysian health experts hold a video conference to exchange experience in the prevention and control of the new coronary pneumonia epidemic and diagnosis ("Zhong Ma Liangguo Weisheng Zhuanjia Juxing Xinguan Feiyan Yiqing Fangkong he Zhenliao Jingyan Jiaoliu Shipin Huiyi"), Embassy of The People's Republic of China in Malaysia, 26 March 2020, available at <http://my.china-embassy.org/chn/sxw/t1761526.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

20. The Malaysian government donated medical supplies, cooperated with China to pick up Chinese Hubei citizens on chartered planes and treated Chinese patients who were diagnosed with COVID-19 in Malaysian public hospitals.
21. In return, China sent a group of anti-pandemic medical experts on 18 April to Malaysia.⁵¹ During March and April, China donated nearly 4.94 million surgical masks, 420,000 N95 masks, 125,000 testing kits, over 70,000 protective suits, 55,000 pairs of gloves, more than 13,000 pairs of goggles and 200 respirators. On 15 May, the Chinese government donated a second batch of anti-pandemic supplies to the Malaysian government.⁵²

China-Myanmar Cooperation

22. Both the Myanmar government and the Tatmataw have issued statements in support of the Chinese government's anti-pandemic measures. President Win Myint wrote to President Xi Jinping, offering assistance through joint efforts. The Myanmar government donated two million catties of rice to Wuhan while the Tatmataw provided anti-pandemic supplies for the city. By early February, different sectors of society in Myanmar had donated hundreds of thousands of dollars, millions of masks and other medical supplies to China.⁵³
23. On 17 March, China provided a batch of anti-pandemic supplies, such as over 2,000 testing kits and masks to Myanmar. On 26 March, medical supplies provided by the Chinese government arrived in Myanmar, totalling 2.45 tons.⁵⁴ On 22 April, the Chinese Embassy in Myanmar provided 30 respirators worth US\$400,000 to the Myanmar government and its army.⁵⁵ On 13 May, the third hand-over ceremony of medical supplies including 150,000 units of testing reagent and 18,000 protective suits from the Chinese government to Myanmar was held.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Chinese medical expert group to Malaysia arrives in Kuala Lumpur ("Zhongguo Fu Malaixiya Yiliao Zhuanjiazu Dida Jilongpo"), Embassy of The People's Republic of China in Malaysia, 20 April 2020, available at <http://my.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1771421.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁵² Second batch of Chinese government aid. Here it comes! ("Dierpi Zhongguo Zhengfu Yuanzhu Daole") Embassy of The People's Republic of China in Malaysia, 15 May 2020, available at <http://my.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1779558.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁵³ "Myanmar enterprises donate masks to China to support the fight against the new coronavirus epidemic", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of The Union of Myanmar, 11 February 2020, available at <http://mm.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1743362.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁵⁴ "Second batch of medical supplies donated by China arrived at Yangon", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of The Union of Myanmar, 27 March 2020, available at <http://mm.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1762222.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁵⁵ "Ventilators donated by China arrived at Yangon", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of The Union of Myanmar, 22 April 2020, available at <http://mm.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1772334.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁵⁶ "The Chinese government provides Myanmar with the third batch of medical supplies", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of The Union of Myanmar, 13 May 2020, available at <http://mm.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1778621.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

24. On 8 April, a Chinese medical expert team arrived in Myanmar, together with anti-pandemic supplies donated by China.⁵⁷ The expert group visited more than 40 medical institutions and public health departments in Yangon and Mandalay, shared their expertise in fighting against COVID-19 and provided technical advice for Myanmar colleagues. On 24 April, anti-pandemic supplies from PLA to the Myanmar army arrived in Yangon, together with a group of six anti-pandemic PLA experts. The group helped set up a nucleic acid testing laboratory in Mandalay, which has been in use since mid-May.
25. On 5 May, the hand-over ceremony of anti-pandemic supplies donated by China Foundation for Peace and Development to Myanmar was held, with supplies worth more than RMB5.5 million.⁵⁸ On 15 May, Shanghai donated 3,000 N95 masks, 20,000 KN95 masks and 750 protective suits to the Yangon region.⁵⁹
26. As the textile industry is a pillar of Myanmar's national economy, the massive cancellation of orders by European and American countries as well as Myanmar's high dependence on imported raw materials had put many enterprises under severe pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, China airlifted 15 tons of raw materials for the industry to Myanmar. It has further helped solve the raw material shortage in Myanmar through aero amphibious channels and to ease the pressure caused by the shutdown of businesses and rising unemployment.⁶⁰

China-Philippines Cooperation

27. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has expressed firm support for China's fight against the COVID-19. Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro Lochen had also refuted the unjustified blame on China with hard evidence. Former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has also expressed opposition to stigmatising China's anti-pandemic efforts. Both the Philippine government and people had donated money and supplies to China. On 8 February, the Philippine government held a hand-over ceremony to provide anti-pandemic supplies to the Chinese government at the Clark International Airport.⁶¹

⁵⁷ "Ambassador to Myanmar Chen Hai welcomes Chinese medical expert group to Myanmar at Airport", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 8 April 2020, available at <http://mm.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1767368.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁵⁸ "The Silk Road Family Joint Campaign: the China Foundation for Peace and Development donates anti-epidemic materials to Myanmar government", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of The Union of Myanmar, 5 May 2020, available at <http://mm.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1776159.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁵⁹ "Shanghai and other cities provide medical aid to Myanmar", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of The Union of Myanmar, 15 May 2020, available at <http://mm.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1779548.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁶⁰ "The first chartered airplane of textile and garment raw material arrived in Yangon, Myanmar", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 18 March 2020, available at <http://mm.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1757510.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁶¹ Philippine government donates anti-epidemic supplies and cheers China ("Feilvbin Zhengfu Xiang Zhongguo Juanzeng Kangyi Wuzi Bing Wei Zhongguo Jiayou"), Embassy of The People's Republic of China in the Philippines, 10 February 2020, available at <http://ph.china-embassy.org/chn/sgdt/t1742688.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

28. On 15 March, State Councillor Wang Yi assured the Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Locsin over the phone that China would do its best to help the Philippines.⁶² On 16 March and 4 April, the Chinese Embassy in the Philippines provided 2,000 testing kits to the Philippines and donated 5,000 protective suits to the Davao municipal government.⁶³ On 24 March, medical experts from China and the Philippines exchanged experiences in fighting against the pandemic.⁶⁴ On 5 April, a group of 12 Chinese medical experts arrived in Manila together with 30 ventilators, over 300,000 masks and other protective supplies.⁶⁵
29. On 21 March, the Chinese government again donated 100,000 testing kits, 100,000 surgical masks, 10,000 N95 masks and 10,000 personal protective equipment to the Philippines.⁶⁶ On 3 April and 10 May, the Chinese government donated 50,000 disposable masks⁶⁷ and provided emergency anti-pandemic supplies to the Philippine government, including 100 ventilators, 150,000 nucleic acid testing reagents, 70,000 medical protective suits, 70,000 N95 masks, 1.3 million surgical masks and 70,000 medical goggles, respectively. On 12 May, a hand-over ceremony

⁶² Wang Yi: China is willing to do its best to help the Philippines (“Wang Yi: Zhongguo Yuan Jin Zuida Nuli Xiang Feilvbin Tigong Bangzhu”), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 15 March 2020, available at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjbz_673089/xghd_673097/t1756129.shtml (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁶³ Watching out for each other, fighting the epidemic: the first 2,000 test kits donated by China to the Philippines arrived in Manila (“Shouwang Xiangzhu, Gongkang Yiqing: Zhongguo Xiang Feilvbin Juanzeng Shoupi 2000ge Jiance Shijihe Yundi Manila”), Embassy of The People’s Republic of China in the Philippines, 16 March 2020, available at <http://ph.china-embassy.org/chn/sgdt/t1756362.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020); and Ambassador Huang Xi Lian hands over medical supplies for epidemic prevention to the Chinese in the Philippines (“Huang Xilian Dashi Xiang Feilvbin Huashe Zhuanjiao Yipi Fangyi Yiliao Wuzi”), Embassy of The People’s Republic of China in the Philippines, 5 April 2020, available at <http://ph.china-embassy.org/chn/sgdt/t1766441.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁶⁴ Medical experts from China and the Philippines share their experience in fighting the epidemic and improve their ability to fight it (“Zhong Fei Liangguo Yiliao Zhuanjia Lianxian Jiaoliu Kangyi Jingyan, Tigao Kangyi Nengli”), Embassy of The People’s Republic of China in the Philippines, 24 March 2020, available at <http://ph.china-embassy.org/chn/sgdt/t1760323.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁶⁵ China’s anti-epidemic medical expert group arrives in the Philippines to help fight the disease (“Zhongguo Kangyi Yiliao Zhuanjiazu Di Fei Xiezhu Kangyi”), Embassy of The People’s Republic of China in the Philippines, 6 April 2020, available at <http://ph.china-embassy.org/chn/sgdt/t1766444.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁶⁶ Philippine Foreign Secretary Locsin: thanks to China for its help and support, China shows the way for the world to fight the epidemic (“Fei Waizhang Luoqin: Ganxie Zhongguo Bangzhu He Zhichi, Zhongguo Wei Shijie Kangyi Zhimingle Fangxiang”), Embassy of The People’s Republic of China in the Philippines, 21 March 2020, available at <http://ph.china-embassy.org/chn/sgdt/t1759598.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020); and “The Philippines receives medical supplies from China”, Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, 21 March 2020, available at <https://www.dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/dfa-releasesupdate/26639-philippines-receives-medical-supplies-from-china> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁶⁷ “The Philippines receives donations from Haikou”, China, Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, 11 April 2020, available at <https://www.dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/dfa-releasesupdate/26648-philippines-receives-donations-from-haikou-china> (accessed 27 May 2020).

of anti-pandemic supplies from China's Ministry of National Defence to the Philippine army was held, with a total of more than 80,000 items in 13 categories.⁶⁸

30. In China, provinces like Fujian, Hainan and Shandong as well as cities like Guangzhou and Nanning have provided anti-pandemic supplies to their sister provinces or cities. Enterprises in China and all sectors of Chinese society have also donated anti-pandemic supplies to the Philippines. By 20 May, Chinese enterprises in the Philippines had donated nearly three million pieces of anti-pandemic supplies, together with money and various kinds of living supplies, worth a total of PHP10 million.

China-Singapore Cooperation

31. Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had expressed his affirmation and confidence in China's fight against the pandemic on several occasions and is strongly opposed to stigmatising the novel coronavirus.⁶⁹ On 29 January, Wang Yi had a teleconversation with Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs Vivian Balakrishnan. In the teleconversation between China's Vice-Premier of the State Council Han Zheng and Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat on 7 February, the two sides agreed to incorporate a joint mechanism for public health emergency into the agenda of the next round of bilateral cooperation mechanism meetings.⁷⁰ On 1 April, China and Singapore convened a vice-ministerial joint video conference on the fight against COVID-19.⁷¹ On 28 April, Wang Yi had a second phone conversation with Vivian to discuss the establishment of a fast visa track for medical personnel and a green channel for transporting urgently needed medical supplies.⁷²
32. China and Singapore have closely cooperated on information communication, medical research and safeguarding of interests of overseas citizens. In early February, Singaporean enterprises donated money and supplies worth over RMB50 million to China. On 8 February, the Singapore government held a hand-over

⁶⁸ Ambassador Huang Xi Lian: China will do its best to help the Philippines until the epidemic is overcome ("Huang Xilian Dashi: Zhongfang Jiang Jinjisuoneng Zhu Fei Zhizhi Zhansheng Yiqing"), Embassy of The People's Republic of China in the Philippines, 10 May 2020, available at <http://ph.china-embassy.org/chn/sgdt/t1777575.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁶⁹ Singapore's Foreign Minister expresses confidence in China's victory over the pandemic ("Xinjiapo Waizhang Dui Zhongfang Zhansheng Xinxing Guan Zhuang Bingdu Yiqing Chongman Xinxin"), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 30 January 2020, available at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjzbz_673089/xghd_673097/t1737328.shtml (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁷⁰ Han is on the phone with Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat ("Han Zheng Tong Xinjiapo Fuzongli Wang Ruijie Tong Dianhua"), Embassy of The People's Republic of China in Singapore, 18 February 2020, available at <http://www.chinaembassy.org.sg/chn/zxwl/t1746128.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁷¹ "Joint Press Statement - Singapore-China Joint Meeting on COVID-19", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, 1 April 2020, available at <https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2020/04/20200401---SG-China-JM-Covid> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁷² Phone call between Wang Yi and Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan ("Wang Yi Tong Xinjiapo Waizhang Wei Wen Tong Dianhua"), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 29 April 2020, available at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjzbz_673089/xghd_673097/t1774564.shtml (accessed 27 May 2020).

ceremony of medical supplies for China and on 19 February provided humanitarian assistance to Beijing.

33. China reciprocated on 5 May at a hand-over ceremony of anti-pandemic supplies, including 500,000 disposable surgical masks, 100,000 KN95 masks and 20,000 N95 masks.⁷³ Chongqing on its own provided 150,000 disposable surgical masks to Singapore.

China-Thailand Cooperation

34. In end January, the King of Thailand, Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha and President of the National Assembly of Thailand and Speaker of the Thai House of Representatives Chuan Leekpai made separate phone calls respectively to President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and Chairman Li Zhanshu of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress to send their sympathies. State Councillor Wang Yi spoke and met Thailand's Minister of Foreign Affairs Don Pramudwinai. The pandemic broke out during the peak season of tourism in Thailand. Thailand did not impose travel restrictions on Chinese nationals going to the country and announced that it would waive the fines for Hubei Chinese citizens and other provinces who overstayed their visas due to flight cancellations. The Thai government has also provided assistance for them to extend their visas.
35. Thailand has provided a high-level medical team to treat Chinese citizens diagnosed with COVID-19 in Thailand for free. On 20 February, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand held the *Thai Sportsmen Here Cheering on China*, a charity football match at the National Stadium. The largest charity in Thailand donated THB5 million to China and the Thai-Chinese Friendship Association donated 10,000 masks to China.⁷⁴
36. On 24 March, China officially handed over anti-pandemic medical supplies to Thailand. A day thereafter, masks, protective suits and other anti-pandemic supplies donated by Chinese enterprises to Thailand arrived in Bangkok. On 13 April, a total of 202 boxes of anti-pandemic supplies donated by Chinese enterprises and organisations to Thailand was delivered at a hand-over ceremony held at the Chinese Embassy in Thailand.⁷⁵ On 12 May, the PLA used military aircraft to provide emergency anti-pandemic supplies to the Thai army.

⁷³ Ambassador Hong Xiaoyong attends the handover ceremony for the Chinese government's anti-pandemic supplies to Singapore ("Hong Xiaoyong Dashi Chuxi Zhongguo Zhengfu Yuanzhu Xinjiapo Kangyi Wuzi Jiaojie Yishi"), Embassy of The People's Republic of China in Singapore, 5 May 2020, available at <http://www.chinaembassy.org.sg/chn/kjxgfyyqzttx/t1776139.htm> (accessed 27 May 2020).

⁷⁴ "The upper house of the Thai Parliament expressed condolences to the Chinese on the new coronavirus epidemic", Embassy of The People's Republic of China in The Kingdom of Thailand, 30 January 2020, available at <http://th.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1737489.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁷⁵ "The Chinese Embassy held a handover ceremony for Chinese enterprises and friendly organizations to donate anti-epidemic materials to Thailand", Embassy of The People's Republic of China in The Kingdom of Thailand, 13 April 2020, available at <http://th.china-embassy.org/chn/sgxw/t1769139.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

China-Vietnam Cooperation

37. Premier Li Keqiang and Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc reached an important consensus on strengthening cooperation in the prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as stabilising the supply chain and industrial chain between China and Vietnam in a telephone call.⁷⁶ As the chair of ASEAN this year, Vietnam issued a chairman's statement, stating its support for China's efforts to fight against the pandemic. Different sectors of Vietnamese society have also actively donated anti-pandemic supplies to China.⁷⁷
38. On 8 February, Vietnam's Ministry of Industry and Trade donated anti-pandemic supplies to China and on 9 February, its Ministry of Foreign Affairs handed over US\$500,000 worth of medical equipment to the Chinese Embassy in Vietnam. Separately, the Red Cross of Vietnam provided US\$100,000 worth of medical supplies. Provinces near the northern border of Vietnam have also extended assistance to China's border provinces in various forms to fight against the epidemic.
39. In the face of COVID-19, China and Vietnam have worked together to maintain the stability of supply and industrial chains between the two countries, and jointly safeguarded the overall landscape of economic and trade cooperation. In Q1 2020, China's imports and exports to Vietnam increased by 18%, accounting for 25.8% of China's total imports and exports to ASEAN and contributing to the overall growth of China's foreign trade with ASEAN by 5.6%.⁷⁸ China's foreign direct investment in Vietnam also rose to the third place in China's outbound FDI ranking and Chinese enterprises have created tens of thousands of jobs in Vietnam. The two sides are working towards agricultural cooperation to maintain the trade of agricultural produce.

⁷⁶ "Prime Minister Li Keqiang and Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc of the Vietnamese Government have a telephone conversation", Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 3 April 2020, available at <http://vn.china-embassy.org/chn/sghkt/t1765575.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁷⁷ "Vietnam hands over medical equipment to China for COVID-19 combat", Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 February 2020, available at <http://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns200211081448> (accessed 28 May 2020).

⁷⁸ "The State Council Office held a press conference on imports and exports in the first quarter of 2020", The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 14 April 2020, available at <http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwfbh/xwfbh/wqfbh/42311/42856/index.htm> (accessed 28 May 2020).